

[Killing of Charlie Bachelor]

Ceaser Brook

Age?

Frances E. Totty [?]

1365 words.

June 5, 1938.

Killing of Charlie Bachelor and other Incidents.

I was raised in Old Megilla, N.M. There was only one other white family in the town, we all spoke the Spanish or rather the tongue of the people in Megilla at the time which was nothing, but an Indian language mixed with Spanish.

When we left Megilla we went to Port Seldon fourteen or fifteen miles up the Rio Grande river from Megilla. While at the Fort we ran the ferry across the river. John Chisom has brought many a herd across the ferry at this point. John Chisom was always the worst dressed man on this crew. He as a general rule was dressed in old worn out overalls that not a one of his men would have worn. He looked as some ragged tramp that had bummed into the country, but was one of the prominent men of New Mexico as well as one of the wealthiest. Mr. Chisom was a man hospitable to everyone that came his way whether he be an outlaw or the most prominent man of the country; all were treated alike and were welcome to his ranche.

We left Fort Seldon and came to Burro Springs in the spring of 1878. We settled there and opened an inn as this was the only water between Gila and Silver City. Everyone came to the springs to spend the night as it was a place that the Indians seemed to stay from for

Library of Congress

they knew that the people were expecting them at all times and a guard were always on the watch. [???

2

One day Charlie Bachelor came into the camp with the stage and seemed to be nervous, he seemed to sense that there was trouble in the vicinity, and after eating decided to change his schedule in order that he cross the Ash Creek, a little northwest of Duncan, Arizona, after night; in order to cross the creek after night he stayed at the springs until three o'clock in the afternoon. When he left he requested that some one go with him as there wasn't any extra men at the springs and Charlie didn't have a man or passenger along so he had to go on the way alone.

When he was about three or four miles from the springs the Indians were hidden and opened fire on his team; shooting his white mule and crippling him. The next shot wounded Charlie in the thigh and arm, but he kept pushing his team on. Finally the Indians thinking that he was going to get away ran out and surrounded the stage and caused Charlie to turn it over in a small wash where reeds had grown up. This was an ideal place for the man to save himself, but in his fright he rushed out of the hole and up to the side of the hill thereby making himself a target for two Indians that were on the side of the hill. The Indians put two 45-70 bullets through a deck of cards that Charlie had in his shirt pocket when they killed him. There were five Apaches in the party and when they began to shoot their horses that they were riding escaped. The braves went down to the stage and raided it. They got a keg of whiskey and went a little farther on and got the keg open and proceeded to get good and drunk.

3

Just about dusk five horses came up the springs and we put them in the corral. In a short time a negro soldier came into camp and we told him of the five horses in the corral and he remarked that Indians had been seen in the district and that he was going to guard the corral. It was my night to stand guard and I usually stayed in the shade of the houses on

Library of Congress

a moonlight night. I was sitting by the side of the house when I saw a shadow moving out by the corral, thinking that it might be the negro I didn't shoot. Then I saw another shadow appear then I knew that it was the Indians, but as I raised up to shoot, I saw the barrel of the gun of the negro sticking up in the air after he shot, and jumped and called "Them were Indians I see'd them." I never wanted to kill anyone so bad in my life for he missed the Indians and caused them to get away before I had a shot at them and he was to scared to shoot anything. When he got to where I was his face was as white as mine and his eyes were popping out of his head as if he had seen a ghost. The Indians didn't come back to the springs, and in a few days the horses were all claimed by their owners that were cattle men in the vicinity.

The morning after the Indians came into the camp to steal the horses Jesus Duran came across the body of Charlie Bachelor and the stage and brought the mail on into town and notified the authorities. Jim Wood, a scout, led the soldiers to the place where the Indians killed Charlie, but they wouldn't follow the trail, instead they turned back to the old trail, when they could have soon captured all five of the warriors as they had 4 been drinking all night and were still close to the place where they killed Charlie. I tell you we old-timers of '79 sure didn't have much use for the soldiers for they did us more harm than good; they were all afraid of the Indians and the Indians knew that they were far more skillful in the fighting of the frontier than the soldiers and usually laughed at the modes the soldiers used. The Indians were sure that they didn't try to massacre a gathering of frontier men though. The day Judge McComas was killed and I shot the Indian in the shoulder the same band of Apaches stole all of the horses of Lyons and Cambell.

We went over on the Middle Gila, the present Red Rock, to gather corn for George Cook. My job was to ride around the field and keep the cattle out of the field as there weren't any fences at that time. I was riding one night when the wind happened to blow my way and I received a scent that told me the Indians were in the wood by the field. I had every sensitive sense of smell and to this fact I can attribute the fact that I am alive today for it has saved me more than once, when I smelled thenIndians I turned back, and went to the

Library of Congress

side of the house for I was afraid to tell the men that I smelled Indians for they would give me the horse laugh, when morning came the Indians had stolen all the horses including the work horses.

The Indians soon learned that I could tell when they were around and I didn' have any trouble with them.

Ceaser Brook.